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# THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## 4HIM, Velasquez: music is 'call from God'

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP) — What keeps Christian musicians motivated as they spend weeks on the road, performing concerts in city after city?

According to the members of 4HIM, the answer is obvious: It's a clear call from God.

"The thing that keeps us glued together is the Lord calling us together as 4HIM," explained Mark Harris, who writes many of the songs recorded by the popular group.

"It's clear that God assembled the four of us at the right time in the right place," he noted. Although the group's four vocalists "are continually going through changes," he added, "The one thing that stays the same is God's calling. In each of our hearts, we know God has called us to be here."

4HIM, a three-time winner of the Dove Award for group of the year, has produced seven albums, 17 No. 1 contemporary

Christian songs, and a book released earlier this year called *The Basics of Life*.

The group recently was in concert at Park Hill Church, North Little Rock along with Jaci Velasquez, winner of the 1997 Dove Award for new artist of the year.

Performing together as 4HIM since 1990, Andy Chrisman said the group seeks to present a straightforward Christian message. "Some people think if you come on too strong, you're going to scare people away," he acknowledged. "We're four church boys. It's natural for us to express the way we feel without pulling any punches."

Kirk Sullivan said one of 4HIM's primary goals is to blend good music with a strong Christian message. Emphasizing "good music doesn't change lives by itself," he added, "The secular music industry doesn't copy what we do. Why should we copy what they do?"

With a new album, appropriately titled "Obvious," and a current 41-city concert tour, Chrisman said one question the group constantly faces is: "Is it worth it?"

Without hesitation, he quickly added, "A definite yes. That's where the calling comes in. When God continues to bless you, that's something that can never be replaced."

Accompanying 4HIM on their current tour, teen singing sensation Jaci Velasquez performed several songs, including her trademark hit, "On My Knees."

Velasquez, who turned 19 last month, recorded her first album at age 16.

The album, "Heavenly Place," was recognized as Christian

music's fastest-selling debut album by a solo artist.

How does Velasquez cope with the pressure and hype of being an award-winning Christian performer?

Traveling and singing with her family since age 9, she explained, "It's the only thing I've ever known. I wouldn't know life without this."

Her mother, Diane, who travels with her, added, "As a mom, I try to help her keep focused. We spend time in prayer and the Word. It's a group effort."

"This is our life. To us this is normal," her mom continued.

"Sometimes it's a little scary because the responsibility has grown. My prayer is for God to give her physical and spiritual energy. It's scary but it's also very gratifying. So many lives are being touched and changed."

Velasquez said her personal goal is to share "a message of hope, a message that there is someone out there who loves everyone despite who they are — a message of hope that God loves the world."

Noting she desires to "reach out to the non-believers and those who feel discouraged in their walk," she said she shares "a message of sexual purity" and "how important family is."

Acknowledging "spiritually, I've had to mature a lot more" in her high-profile ministry opportunities, Velasquez added, "You try to make sure you don't do anything wrong. You have to constantly live above reproach."



Velasquez

As she moves into adulthood, Velasquez said she anticipates continuing "to minister to the people around my same age."

Noting some of her ministry goals include recording an album in Spanish and starting a Spanish-language radio station in Nashville, Tenn., she said "the coolest thing I've done so far" is to sing during a Billy Graham crusade.

Looking toward the future of contemporary Christian music — a future she is sure to be a vital part of — Velasquez said, "I'm pleased with the direction it's heading."

"I wish we could draw more non-Christians. We have to figure out some ways of doing that."



4HIM

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### IMB relief fund running low

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists' response to the disaster in Central America caused by Hurricane Mitch is being limited by a short supply of funds, says the director of the International Mission Board (IMB) human needs program.

On Nov. 4, the board's general relief fund stood at \$42,186, said John Cheyne, interim director of the IMB human needs department. Since then, as much as \$20,000 has been spent on projects to relieve the suffering of thousands of people whose lives were devastated by Hurricane Mitch.

Part of the problem comes from the fact that Southern Baptists have given generously for hunger relief, but gifts designated for world hunger cannot be used for disaster relief, Cheyne said.

Contributions to the General Relief Fund may be sent to: Office of Finance, International Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

### Looking back

#### 10 years ago

Richard Brogan, president of Mississippi Baptist Seminary in Jackson since 1984, passes the presidential medallion to Hickman Johnson, the seminary's new president, after the Mississippi Baptist Convention votes to sever 45-year-old ties with the African-American seminary.

#### 20 years ago

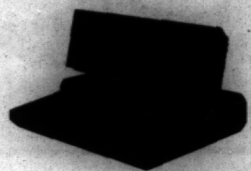
Bill Causey, pastor of Parkway Church, Jackson, is elected president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He is nominated by David Grant, pastor of Broadmoor Church, Jackson. Causey succeeds Robert Hamblin of Harrisburg Church, Tupelo.

#### 50 years ago

At the Tuesday morning session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, Baptist Hospital in Jackson is granted permission to go in debt to purchase land for badly-needed expansion. Hospital board vice-president Harvey Hedgepeth explains there is an urgent need for parking.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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# Being known by our fruit

**N**ot too long ago, one of the featured speakers for the Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting was being driven by a volunteer to the Jackson International Airport to catch his flight home. "Tell me," he asked his driver, "are all your convention meetings in Mississippi as peaceful as the sessions I witnessed?"

"Yes, sir," replied the driver, "pretty much so." A sad expression washed over the speaker's face as he lowered his head and said, "It's not that way in my state."

Indeed, it's not that way in many state Baptist conventions — and if the 1998 annual meetings around the Southern Baptist Convention are a barometer, factionalism and its kin, intrigue, are assuming ever more prominent roles on the state level.

Texas is the latest state convention to split, with a dissident group called Southern Baptists of Texas (SBT) exiting the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT).

"We broke camp. We're gone. We ain't coming back... and I tell you, not one penny of my tithe is going anywhere I think is ungodly," said SBT president Miles Seaborn.

"These are the real Texas Baptists," proclaimed E.L. Pennington, chairman of the SBT budget committee.

On the BGCT side, president Russell Dilday observed that the takeover tactics used to gain control of the Southern Baptist Convention were "exposed" in Texas, and, "It was a matter of people waking up and saying what happened in the SBC wasn't going to happen here."

You will recall that Seaborn, the SBT president, was deeply involved in the dismissal of Dilday, the BGCT president, when Dilday was president of Southwestern

Seminary. Now these two men are locked in a struggle for control of the future of Baptist work in that bellwether state.

Such is the fruit of factionalism.

In Missouri, a group calling itself "Project 1000" conducted meetings apparently designed to promote a preferred type of of candidate for state convention offices, and to get out the vote at the state convention annual meeting.

When a reporter for Word & Way, the Missouri Baptist newsjournal, arrived

to cover one of the Project 1000 meetings, he was invited to leave.

Shortly thereafter, a record number of voting messengers at this year's Missouri Baptist Convention annual meeting elected Project 1000-preferred candidates to the top four state convention posts.

Such is the fruit of intrigue.

Not a single character in these two sagas has been tagged in this editorial as a member of one political camp or another. Labels really don't matter when, like the Mississippi Baptist Convention speaker, we find ourselves in mourning for what should not be in the Body of Christ.

Like the children of a bitter custody battle, we can become the scarred, innocent victims of an insatiable thirst for victory and control at all costs.

**"WE ARE GOING TO A  
MAGNIFICENT LAND THE  
LORD HAS PREPARED FOR  
US! JUST BECAUSE HE  
LOVES US!"**



The work left to us by our Savior is more important than political gain and should never be subject to factionalism and intrigue.

It is the publicly-spoken dream of many Mississippi Baptist leaders that our state lead the Southern Baptist Convention in providing a true reflection of Christ in everything that we do, regardless of labels and political consequences.

God forbid that Mississippi Baptists should ever be rent asunder by factionalism and intrigue. If that is our prayer — and if we really mean it — God will forbid that it ever happen here.

Let us be known by the fruit we bear (Matt. 7:17-20). In light of the sacrifice our Savior made for us, staying focused on the main thing is really the very least we can do for him.

## GUEST OPINION

### Do you appreciate your pastor?

By Joe Brooks, pastor  
Brodie Road Church, D'Iberville

- ◆ A new day planner.
- ◆ A chocolate pie from one member who understood my conviction that "in heaven, chocolate will be a vegetable."
- ◆ I had to be absent from the church one Sunday, so they had a "Pastor's Wife Appreciation Day" for Lisa. I wasn't a bit jealous.
- ◆ A love offering to help us have our house painted.
- ◆ A special service where they sang many of my favorite songs, presented Lisa and me with two poems written by our church's "Poet Laureate," and a plaque of the "Shepherd's Calling" passage from 1 Pet. 5.

From now on, whenever I think of Jesus' words "to whom much is given, much will be required," I will always remember the high requirement of gratitude I owe to my church for their tremendous generosity.

The tokens of love from this wonderful church have really

broadened my perception of "how wide and deep and high and long" is the love of Christ which passes all knowledge.

When I was 16, I surrendered my life to full-time Christian service after hearing a sermon on "God's Demonstration of Love." This past month has been a refresher course on many of the ways God demonstrates his love through the Body of Christ.

I have really thought and prayed hard to come up with ways to return my love and gratitude to my church. They made October seem like Christmas for Lisa, my boys, and me.

Every time I think of their thoughtful ways, my eyelids start leaking.

After drinking in all the new wine of encouraging words my church has poured on me, it motivates me toward a repayment plan — namely, to be a better pastor.

Almost every week at the

Pastor's Conference in Gulf Coast Association, we pray for pastors near and far who have been wounded in the battles of ministry. It always distresses me to hear such reports.

Frankly, some wounds pastors receive are from weapons we hold in our own hands, and aim at our own feet, and fire with our own trigger fingers.

I have known godly men who have made great sacrifices to serve their churches only to be returned with a lukewarm shrug of the shoulders and an ungrateful, "Is that all you can do for us?"

When I think of those men, it makes me wish every pastor could have a church as loving and kind as Brodie Road has been to my family and me.

Perhaps someone will ask your pastor to leave the church council meeting to start planning your own church's "Pastor Appreciation Month" or, at least, give him a taste of heaven's favorite vegetable.

Perhaps, someday, I'll live up to the high opinion my people seem to have of me.

To say I am undeserving of such treatment is an obvious understatement.

I really hope the Lord will forgive my people for the words of encouragement they poured over me that often bordered on stretching the truth.

May he forgive me, too — for drinking it in.



# MC capital campaign exceeds \$80 million goal

CLINTON, Miss. (Special) — A \$20 million gift from an anonymous group of donors has pushed Mississippi College (MC) past the \$80 million goal of the Baptist-affiliated school's "A New Dawn" capital campaign — three years early.

The latest gift pushes the campaign total to more than \$88 million.

"We can indeed move mountains if we step out in faith, and this institution has done just that," said alumnus Bernie Ebberts, chairman of the campaign and head of MCI WorldCom, Inc., in Clinton.

MC President Howell W. Todd gave the glory to God and complimented the MC family on their support for the 173-year-old Clinton school.

"Mississippi College has such a tremendous heritage in producing high-quality graduates in a very wholesome environment, and I knew that our alumni and friends would support us in this campaign."

"It was time to move for-

ward. We recently began two new major projects on the campus which are part of the campaign improvements — the new women's residence hall and a connector building that

will join the Hederman Science building with Self Hall.

"The cumulative spending on the renaissance of the campus infrastructure now surpasses \$50 million."



OVER THE TOP — Alumni and friends of Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton react Oct. 17 to the announcement that the school's "A New Dawn" capital campaign has exceeded its \$80 million goal by more than 10%, with three years remaining on the campaign calendar. The alumni luncheon was held during homecoming in A.E. Wood Coliseum on the school's Clinton campus. (BR special photo)

"There has been an incredible grass roots effort in the campaign directed by MC vice-president Danny Rutland and his staff."

Rutland, vice-president for institutional advancement, pointed out that the campaign has three remaining years.

"This, by no means, is the end. We plan to continue our efforts so that every alumnus and friend will have an opportunity to be a part of this historic moment in the life of MC."

"This is a five-year campaign and we plan on seeing it through to its conclusion," he said.

For more information, contact Rutland at (601) 925-3256.



## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

# Record

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# Kenyan judge finds missionary 'guilty'

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP) — A Kenyan judge found Southern Baptist missionary Terry Bell guilty of charges stemming from a June 10, 1995, accident in Nairobi in which a 16-year-old pedestrian was killed after she darted in front of Bell's car.

Bell was convicted on Oct. 8 despite the fact no evidence was presented that he had broken any law. A civil suit brought by the girl's parents against Bell's insurance company now can proceed because of the verdict.

The judge's decision came after multiple delays that dragged the case out for 17 months.

Bell first received a summons in June 1997 — two years after the accident. The judge granted several delays because prosecution witnesses or lawyers failed to appear in court.

The judge ruled Bell was guilty of "causing death by dangerous driving" and "failing to stop after an accident." She fined Bell the equivalent of \$540 and banned him from driving in Kenya for three years.

Bell and his wife, Twylia, serve as International Mission Board missionaries in Tanzania. He works in agricultural development in Shinyanga.

"We were all very surprised about the verdict," Bell said. "Throughout the whole process the prosecution never was able to prove that I had done anything wrong. All of their witnesses were either contradictory in their testimony or could not state a single fact to point out that I had done anything wrong."

Bell admitted he left the scene of the accident. Missionaries in some countries are told to go straight to a police station after an accident to avoid vigilante violence at the hands of the crowd that invariably gathers.

"Our lawyer said he himself would never stay at the scene of an accident because of the possibility of vigilante vio-

lence," Bell said. "He said what we did was fully within the limits of the law as he understands it and that he could not understand why the judge came to these conclusions."

Bell said he was tempted to ask God why he allowed such a verdict, which could have included a 10-year prison sentence, "but we must remember that his ways are not our ways," Bell said.

"He has answered the prayers of every person who interceded for us."

The outcome could have been much worse.

"I believe God is going to accomplish some things in the lives of other people who were involved in this trial that we may never know about. He never allows anything to come about without a purpose," he said.

An appeal of the decision is possible, but Bell said his family would seek God's guidance about whether to file an appeal.

"I think we would be happy that the matter be put to rest right now," he said.

The prayers of fellow Christians meant a lot to the family throughout the prolonged ordeal, Bell said.

"We want to express our deepest gratitude and thanks to every prayer warrior who had any part in praying," Bell said.

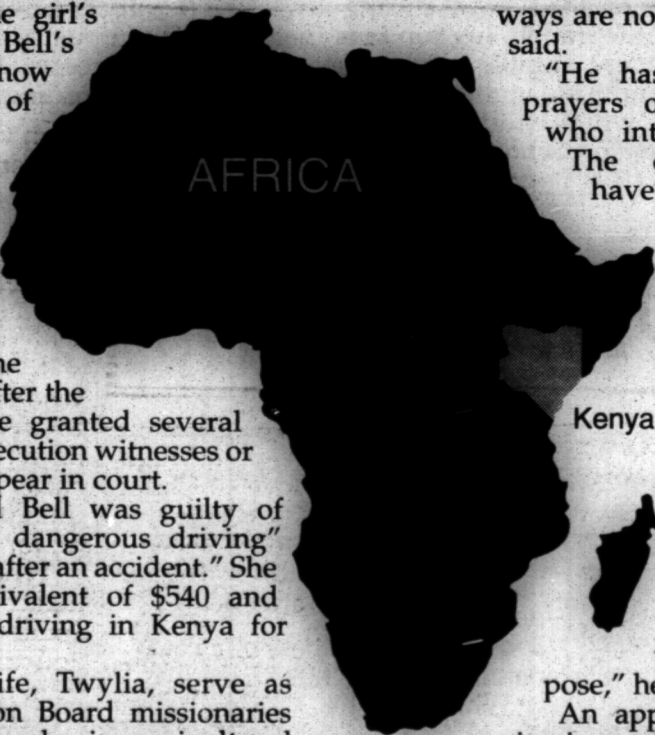
"We have been constantly amazed, and even more humbled, by the constant influx of letters and e-mail from people all over the U.S. and even from other countries who tell us of their concern and intercession to the Father on our behalf," he said.

Bell hopes those who prayed for him

will turn their attention to the people groups of the world that need to hear the good news of God's love.

"There is a great prayer support force that needs to be utilized to intercede for people who have a greater need than we ever had during this trial," Bell said.

"I want to challenge these same prayer warriors to pray for the peoples of the world so they will not have to stand before the judge on the great white throne and be read a verdict that sentences them to eternal separation from our Lord's presence," he said.



## Miss. Baptists honor Clower

Mississippi Baptists voted unanimously to honor the late Jerry Clower during the 1998 Mississippi Baptist Convention Oct. 28 at First Church, Jackson. Messengers approved a resolution of appreciation for Clower's life and ministry, and they dedicated the 1998 convention annual to Clower's memory.

Clower, an Amite County native known both as a country humorist and dedicated Christian layman, died at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson on Aug. 24 from cardio-respiratory failure, several days after undergoing heart bypass surgery.

He got his start in the entertainment business in the late 1960's while working as a fertilizer salesman for the late Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, one of the founders of Mississippi Chemical Company and the last layman to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

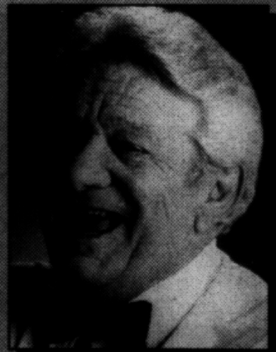
The convention resolution noted that Clower "never hesitated to share his conversion experience with others."

The resolution also mentioned his nearly 50 years of marriage to Homerline, their four children, his public education advocacy, Gideon membership, and service as first president of the Mississippi Baptist AgriMissions Fellowship.

In the more public eye, Clower was co-host of Country Crossroads and a comedian on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. He was named Country Comedian of the Year and produced a number of best-selling albums.

The resolution concluded, "We express to his wife, Homerline, and their four children our profound sympathy and assure them of our prayers on their behalf and our remembrance of Jerry Clower as a unique man who faithfully used his talents for the glory of God and the witness of his church."

The 1998 Mississippi Baptist Convention annual will include Clower's picture as an appropriate remembrance of his life and Christian service.



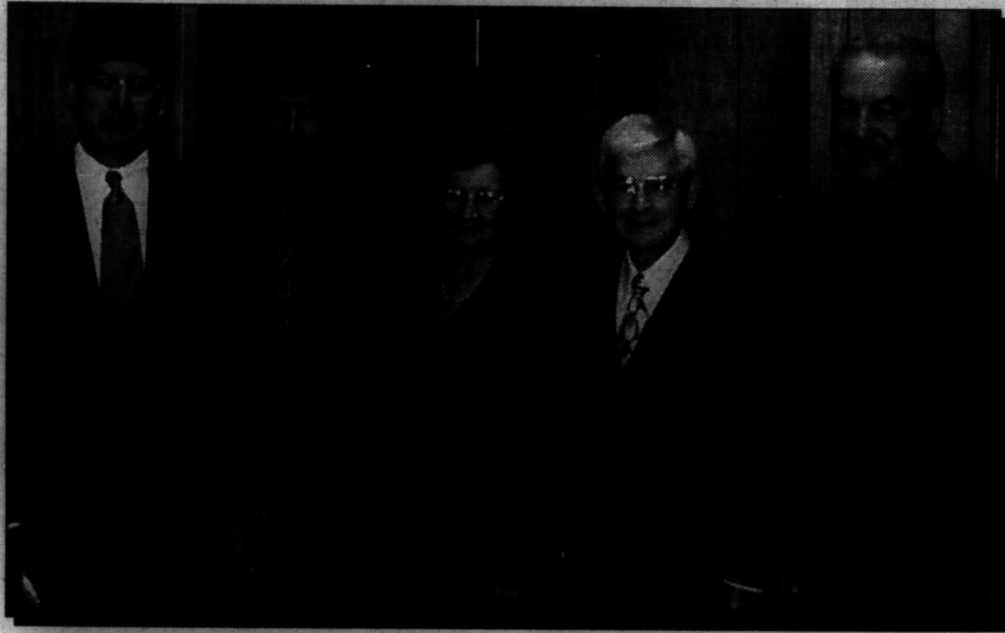
Clower



# Former WCC head gives papers to schools

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

Ralph Noonkester, president of Hattiesburg-based William Carey College (WCC) from 1952 to 1989, announced the donation of his personal papers to WCC at a Nov. 4 press conference on the campus.



## PAPERS DONATED

Together at the Nov. 4 presentation of the Noonkester presidential papers are (from left) Larry Kennedy, president of William Carey College (WCC); Myron Noonkester, WCC professor; Naomi and Ralph Noonkester; and Vernon Dahmer Jr. (Photo by Carl M. White)

"I can now, today, define my legacy to the state of Mississippi in general and to WCC in particular... in the area of civil rights," Noonkester said.

The papers cover the period during the 1960's which includes the acceptance of the first African-American students at WCC, the murder of Vernon Dahmer Sr. and firebombing of his store and residence, and the integration of the Hattiesburg public school system.

The papers chronicle the Noonkester family's involvement in what turned out to be pivotal years for WCC, the community, and the family.

In addition to the donation to WCC, a microfilm copy of the papers will be presented to the Mississippi Baptist Archives

at Mississippi College in Clinton.

Copies of the papers pertaining to the Dahmer murder and the integration of the Hattiesburg public schools will be placed in the archives at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Noonkester, as president of the Mississippi Baptist-affiliated school, president of the Hattiesburg Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Hattiesburg school board, was in a unique position in regard to all three civil rights events in the Hattiesburg area.

The Dahmer murder coincided with the time Noonkester served as president of the Hattiesburg Chamber of Commerce.

The day of the firebombing, Noonkester visited the Dahmer family, and volunteered to chair the committee to raise funds to rebuild the Dahmer residence outside Hattiesburg.

"You did that at great personal risk," said Vernon Dahmer Jr., speaking on behalf of the Dahmer family.

The younger Dahmer was serving in the U.S. military when his father was killed in the firebombing that left the family homeless.

"During those times it was risky for everyone who was about changing the racial climate in Mississippi.

"We want you and Mrs. Noonkester and your family to know today that we will forever be grateful to you for standing up for the right thing and sticking with the Dahmer family for some 33 years," Dahmer said.

Noonkester also served on the Hattiesburg public school board for five years after his retirement from WCC in 1988. The collection contains papers from his leadership role on the school board.

In addition, the papers reflect the Noonkester family's involvement in the integration of Hattiesburg public schools.

Noonkester recalled how, during the early days of integration, his son was the only white student at Lillie Burney Junior High School, and his daughter one of only four or five white students at Mary Bethune Elementary School.

He recalled members of the WCC board of trustees approaching him with the offer to send his children to the best prep school in the country, free of charge.

"I went and immediately consulted with those two kids, along with my wife, and they said, 'We are not leaving home. It is our decision to stay here and face this,'" Noonkester remembered.

Noonkester indicated his papers recount the voluntary admission of black students at WCC during his administration in the early 1960's, "...ahead of every Baptist college in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana."

Noonkester pointed to the important behind-the-scenes involvement of N.R. Burger, then principal of Rowan High School in Hattiesburg, in the integration of WCC.

One of the two African-American students who enrolled at WCC was Vermester Jackson. She led her class academically all four years at WCC, Noonkester recalled.

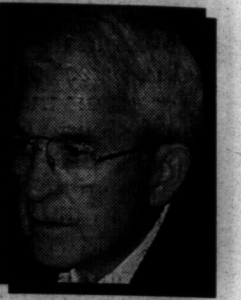
"This is a record that was accomplished here," Noonkester said. "Nobody was trying to manufacture good grades for Vermester Jackson. The way was led by very superior academic students," he said.

In addition, Noonkester indicated his papers include records of the significant convocation held at WCC in April of 1981, when Leontyne Price was honored.

Price, a native Mississippian, is a world renowned African-American opera star.

"I take great pride in today's status of WCC and of the city of Hattiesburg in general," Noonkester said.

"It is my hope that the papers deposited on this campus, and the copies in these two strategic places, will be a very special assistance in recording for all future students the significant events in the civil rights era," he observed.



Noonkester

## No BR Nov. 26; Dec. deadlines announced

Due to postal regulations that limit The Baptist Record to 50 issues per year, the newspaper will not publish on Nov. 26. News items submitted after deadline of Nov. 12 for the issue of Nov. 19 will appear in the Dec. 3 issue of The Baptist Record.

In order to stay within the 50-issue limit, The Baptist Record will also not be published on Dec. 24. All news for the issues of Dec. 17 and Dec. 31 must arrive in the newspaper office by Dec. 10. All advertising for the Dec. 17 and Dec. 31 issues must arrive in the newspaper office by Dec. 3.

For more information, contact Debbie Sills at The Baptist Record. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Why is it that when bad things happen, it seems that other bad things happen? Occasionally you still hear somebody say, "When it rains it pours!"

Driving to work recently I saw a wreck. The emergency vehicles were on the scene and all seemed to be under control as I slipped by, but within a half-mile there was yet another wreck.

Two separate, unrelated crashes — some days there are none. On this day it seemed like we were trying to catch up.

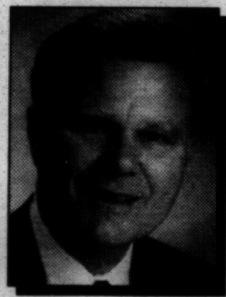
Why do troubles come in handfuls like that? It's not always big things but just bunches of things.

I remember when our children were small, one morning it seemed as though everything was in slow motion and nothing was coming together.

Shirley and I were rushing around trying to get kids fed. She had to get to school to teach and I was trying to get to an appointment at church. She had to leave me to finish up with the kids and deliver them to the baby-sitter.

I gave specific, clear instructions for both of the kids to finish eating breakfast while I took care of some other things.

I was in the bedroom trying



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

to finish getting everything together, when my oldest child, standing in the doorway, announced, "Daddy, Rob spilled something on him."

Great! I immediately thought of milk, some jelly, something that we can wipe off and be on our way.

We walked into the kitchen and there was my not-quite-two-year-old-son sitting in the chair. He spilled something, all right — a half-gallon bucket of molasses.

You don't wipe up molasses! You don't even wash up molasses. You don't even chisel molasses, but that's the way life is. There are days when nothing comes together and life gets a little sticky.

Job, the Old Testament servant of God, experienced a life log-jammed with problems. He

had financial difficulties, painful death experiences, health problems, and the sadness of a companion who was not supportive.

What in the world happened? Where was God? Did he care? What was really happening when these things occurred?

♦ It is a fact that sometimes a multiplicity of problems converge at the crossroads of life. Jesus experienced this as his disciples betrayed him, denied him, and deserted him. Alone he hung on the cross, scorned by the world.

♦ At other times when a significant problem comes, it intensifies even the smallest of other problems. If you are carrying some major burden and some small, weighty thing comes along, it too becomes big.

♦ Whether dealing with one

item or five, you can mark it down that God cares and is able to sustain you.

The Word of God arrived in a certain man's life, at what may have been his lowest point of frustration and questions.

God said to the Apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you."

Like Paul, we want God to take things away, when God is thinking that he wants to add something to our lives.

Think about it. Which is better — to have a burden taken away, a thorn in the flesh removed, or to experience God in ways that you had not known before?

It may not be difficult at all for you or me to answer that question academically.

We want to experience God, but when the molasses is dripping off the chair and all over the floor, or our health is not what we would want it to be, or the job turns sour, or we lose something or somebody we love, then things look different and the answer does not come so easily.

As you wrestle with today's problems, maybe even multiple problems, look for God and look for the good things he may be trying to do in your life.



# Patterson Place taking shape at Garaywa

By Wilda Fancher  
Miss. Woman's Missionary Union

There was not a wall in sight. Only framing, though it was certainly serious framing — big pieces of lumber coming up out of the bare concrete foundation to meet even bigger rafters. Only vast stretches of bare concrete floor strewn with maybe a mile or two of electric cables and cords. All kinds of loud sounds echoed from the under-construction Patterson

Place to change the usual November stillness of Camp Garaywa near Clinton.

Somehow I did not see only bare floors and bare boards. Instead, I saw walls and woodwork rails and banisters all covered with paints in lovely greens, pinks, corals, and earthtones.

From the meeting room I heard the sounds of a choir on retreat working on their Christmas music to celebrate Christ's birth.

In a guest room I saw a hus-

band and wife kneeling in prayer, seeking the feel of God's hand in theirs to lead them into the next path their feet should walk, the reason for which they had come to their church's couples' retreat.

In the rocking chairs on the second-floor screened porch I saw friends in one corner laughing; in another corner I saw a serious discussion going on; and then, some folks were just sitting and rocking.

So, Patterson Place, the fin-

ished building is what I saw, full of people whose lives make a difference in their world.

Then we went to meet around the table and talk about the bottom line — to see if we can possibly realize our other Big Dream, that Patterson Place will be debt-free by dedication



Patterson Place

## Staying Well

### New Procedure Provides Relief From Chronic Heartburn

Indigestion. Difficulty sleeping after an evening meal. A burning sensation in the chest or abdomen. More than 18 million Americans suffer from these common, but extremely uncomfortable symptoms. The culprit? Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), more commonly known as chronic heartburn.

Heartburn occurs when the muscles operating the valve opening between the stomach and the esophagus become weak, allowing stomach acid or food to pass from the stomach back up into the esophagus. As any sufferer of heartburn knows, the sensation is far from pleasant. But a new procedure is providing relief for a great many people.

At Baptist, Dr. Anthony Petro and other surgeons perform the procedure, which is called a *laparoscopic nissen*. First, the surgeon makes five to six small incisions, creating a passageway for a laparoscope — a surgical device that houses a small video camera. The device transmits images from inside the body to a video monitor in the operating room. Using the video image as a guide, the surgeon then uses another instrument to actually wrap a part of the stomach around the lower part of the esophagus. This increases lower esophageal pressure, and thus prevents reflux.

*Laparoscopic nissen* requires no major incisions and reduces hospital stays significantly. Most patients are discharged the morning after surgery and can resume employment within a couple of weeks. Moreover, the procedure allows most of them to give up their heartburn medication altogether.

"Most people are happy after the videoscopic surgery," notes Dr. Petro, "because it eliminates the need for a large incision which must be made during traditional or 'open' surgery." Dr. Petro adds that "after undergoing this procedure, 95% of the patients have no reflux and are very satisfied."

For more information about heartburn or this revolutionary new procedure, call Baptist at 1-800-948-6262.

### Understanding the Benefits of Clinical Laparoscopic Surgery

For more information, call 1-800-948-6262.

**Baptist**  
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on March 15, the first day of the WMU Annual Meeting. We can.

To do that you and I need to give \$450,000 more to meet the original cost of \$1.5 million and to provide a bit of a cushion to use in operating the first few months.

The simplest way is to make a check payable to Camp Garaywa Fund and mail it to Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. If you wish to make your gift in honor of or in memory of someone special, please give all the necessary information concerning that person and family.

Our campaign logo is: Hand in Hand Garaywa Expands, honoring our heritage, lengthening our legacy, Debt-free by Dedication. Thanks to all of you who have already given and to all of you who will give.

## REACHING ROMANIA '99 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Needed are Physicians, Dentists, Pharmacists, Nurses, Medical and Dental Assistants, Bible School Workers, Clerical Workers, Pastors, Soul Winners, and Anyone who has a willing heart to help others.

GARY BOWLIN EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION, INC., THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION, AND THE BAPTISTS OF ROMANIA INVITE YOU TO BE A PART OF A MEDICAL/ EVANGELISM/BIBLE SCHOOL TEAM TO BRASOV, ROMANIA ON JUNE 10 -20, 1999

The team will conduct medical clinics, personal evangelism and Bible Schools in villages near Brasov, Romania

For more information, please contact:

Rev. Gary Bowlin • 119 Tiffany Dr.,  
Brandon, MS 39042 • Tel: (601) 825-1043

FAX (601) 825-1043 or 969-2109

e-mail: gbowli19@idt.net



# National roundup: states hold conventions

## IOWA

Iowa Baptists adopted a 1 percent-of-budget increase in giving to Southern Baptist Cooperative Program missions and ministries during their third annual meeting Oct. 30-31 at All Nations Church, a multi-ethnic congregation in Iowa City.

The 1999 budget of \$1,436,497, a 2.08% increase over the current year, includes an anticipated \$458,210 in CP giving from the state's 98 churches and missions, encompassing more than 12,000 members.

Elected as convention officers were Mike Carlson, pastor of Calvary Church, Indianola, president; Leo Endel, pastor of Southern Hills Church, Sioux City, first vice president; Mel Hooten, pastor of Grandview Heights Church, Grandview Heights, second vice president; and Terry Wilkinson, pastor of Harvest Church, Clive, recording secretary.

## DAKOTAS

W.D. "Doc" Lindsey was unanimously elected executive director/missions director for the Dakota Southern Baptist Fellowship by its executive board Oct. 3. He began work Nov. 1.

Messengers to the annual meeting of the Dakota Fellowship, Oct. 22-23 in Piedmont, S.D. approved a 1999 budget of \$1,025,061. The 14% forwarded to the SBC is the same as last year.

Ron Rich, pastor of Riverwood Church, Bismarck, N.D., was elected fellowship president. Rich was the first vice president. Other officers elected were Steve Evans, pastor of Calvary Church, Rapid City, S.D., vice president; Allen Spencer, minister of music and drama, Riverwood Church, Bismarck, N.D., recording secretary; and Darla Grim, layperson from First Southern Baptist Church, Sioux Falls, S.D., assistant recording secretary.

## COLORADO

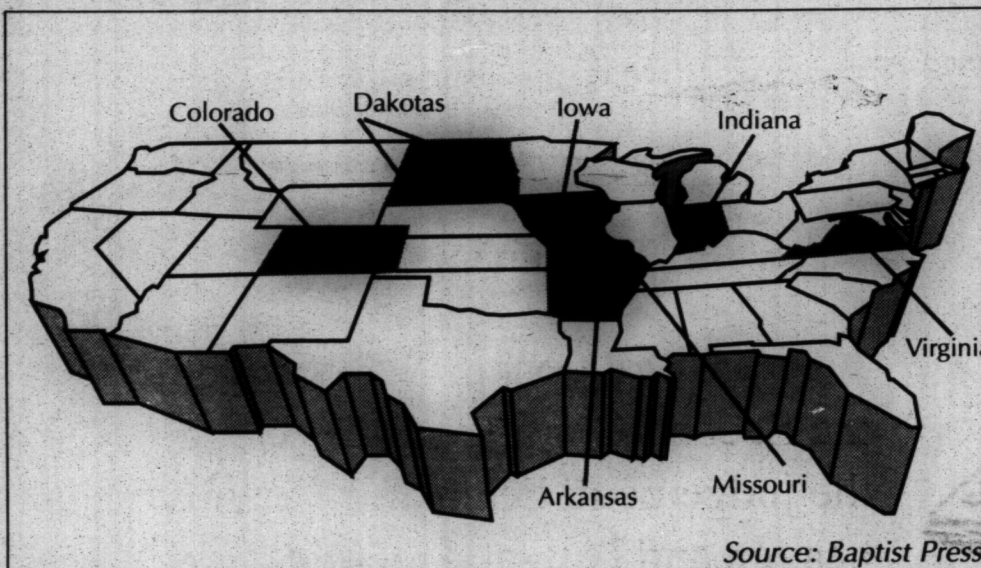
A 10.1 % budget increase was adopted during the Colorado Baptist General Convention's annual meeting Oct. 27-28 at The Pavillion convention center, Montrose.

The 1999 budget of

\$3,210,025, includes restored funding for a women's missions and ministries director, including responsibility for Woman's Missionary Union, which was shifted to auxiliary status during the mid-1980's in a time of convention financial cutbacks.

Re-elected to a second one-year term were the conven-

Jay Scribner, pastor of First Church, Branson, was elected first vice president; Bob Curtis, pastor of Ballwin Church, Ballwin, was unopposed for the second vice presidency; and Kerry Messer, layman from Bloomsdale Church, Bloomsdale, was elected recording secretary.



Source: Baptist Press

A 1999 Cooperative Program budget of \$2,285,940 was approved by the messengers. This amount is 1.01% higher than last year's figure. Of this total, 32.5% will be forwarded to the SBC for convention causes, an increase of .25%.

Elected as new officers: Woody Cumbie, pastor of Northside Church in Indianapolis, president; John Duncan, pastor of First Church, Jasper, first vice president; and Mike Thompson, pastor of Washington Avenue Church, Evansville, second vice president.

## VIRGINIA (BGAV)

Messengers to this year's Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) marked 175 years of ministry in a quiet meeting that included the election of four officers without opposition and the adoption of a \$15 million budget for 1999.

Elected by acclamation as president was Gene Watson, a businessman from Farmville, Va., and member of Farmville Church. Also elected were David Sapp, pastor of Derbyshire Church in Richmond, Va., as first vice president; Ellen Gwathmey, minister of visitation and outreach at River Road Church in Richmond, as second vice president; and Fred Anderson of Richmond, executive director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, as clerk.

## ARKANSAS

Arkansas Baptists celebrated their 150th anniversary as a state convention, agreed to pray for President Clinton and adopted a detailed trustee selection process during their 1998 state convention annual meeting. The meeting was held Nov. 3-4 on the campus of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia.

The 1999 CP budget of \$17,682,975, which remains the same at this year's budget, includes 41.77% for Southern Baptist Convention causes, 30.2% for executive board programs and 28.03% for Arkansas Baptist entities and related ministries.

## INDIANA

While 253 messengers to Indiana Baptists' annual meeting tended to the business at hand, they also celebrated the convention's 40th anniversary.

tion's president, James Vaughan, director of missions for the Grand Valley Association; first vice president, Rick Lewis, pastor of Emmanuel Church, Sterling; and second vice president, Willard Johnson, assistant pastor of Denver Temple Church.

A total of 292 messengers attended the meeting.

## MISSOURI

Conservative nominees won the four elected offices of the Missouri Baptist Convention during its 164th annual meeting Nov. 2-4 in St. Louis.

During the meeting, the convention's new executive director, James L. Hill, was installed, while messengers passed \$17.5 million budget. A total of 2,995 messengers and visitors were in attendance.

In the convention's presidential election, Gary Taylor, pastor of First Church, O'Fallon, received a record 1,282 votes over Bill Miller, pastor of First Church, Farmington, who received 744.

## C. C. Cornelius, former pastor, dies at age 79

C. C. "Chris" Cornelius, 79, died Nov. 3 at Whispering Pines Hospice in Jackson, following an extended illness. Funeral services were held Nov. 5 in Brandon.

Cornelius was a native of Tishomingo and lived in Brandon for the past 11 years. He served as an active pastor for 32 years. Churches he served as pastor were Mt. Olive, Meridian; Hope and Laurel Hill, both in Philadelphia; Roundaway, Doddsville; West Drew, Drew; New Prospect, Iuka; Branch, Morton; Parkview, Tallulah, La.; Chunky, Chunky; West End, West Point; and North Crest, Meridian.

He is survived by his wife Beth Cornelius; daughter, Hilda Guysinger of Brandon; sister, Marie Woodruff of Memphis; brothers, Pat and Ruel Cornelius, both of Tishomingo; three grandchildren; six great grandchildren; and one great grandchild.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

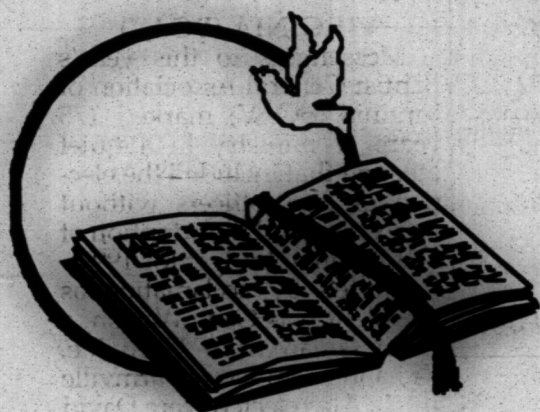
Matthew 10:27 NAS

November 19, 1998

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Office of Communication.**

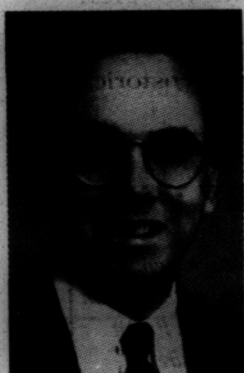
## 1999 Doctrine Study

### OUR CHRISTIAN HOPE



Did a teenager in your church or family ever ask you questions about the Second Coming of Jesus? Do you know what the Bible teaches about the judgement, death and the intermediate state, the resurrection of the body, heaven and hell, and eternity?

These questions will be explored in the 1999 Doctrine Study.



David S. Dockery is the 15th president of Union University, Jackson, Tenn. Prior to going to Union He served as vice president for academic administration and professor of New Testament theology at Southern Seminary. Dockery has served as general editor of Broadman Press at the LifeWay Christian Resources and has served churches in Texas, New York, and Alabama.

He is the author or editor of more than a dozen books and has contributed to many more. He is the New Testament editor of the New American Commentary and a consulting editor for *Christianity Today*. Dockery is a widely sought after speaker on matters of higher education, theological and biblical issues, and cultural trends.

He and his wife Lanese and have three sons Jon, Ben and Tim.



Stan Norman has been assistant professor of theology at the New Orleans Seminary since 1998. Earlier he taught at Dallas Baptist University, Criswell College, and Charleston Southern University.

He earned the Ph.D. in systematic theology from Southwestern Seminary in 1997. Church service includes pastorates in Texas.

He is author of "The Theological Distinctives of Baptists," for an upcoming issue of *SBC Life*.

Stan and his wife joy have three children, Robert, Daniel, and Stephen.

**PREVIEWS (brunch included)**  
**BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT**  
**THE FUTURE**  
by David S. Dockery

**January 11, 1999**

9 a.m. - noon

Pearl River Baptist Association Office  
Led by: Stan Norman

**January 12, 1999**

9 a.m. - noon

Metro Baptist Association Office  
Led by: David Dockery

**January 14, 1999**

9 a.m. - noon

Lee Baptist Association Office  
Led by: David Dockery

### REGISTRATION FORM

**Cost for preview brunch and doctrine book is \$5.**

To register, complete the form below and mail to Don Hicks, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, or fax to 601-968-3928. Please make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Association: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of those Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be teaching this study? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Reservations are requested** so that food can be ordered for the brunches and so that each participant can be given a copy of Dr. Dockery's book, *Our Christian Hope: Bible Answers to Questions About the Future.*



# 1999 Young Ringers Festival Saturday, March 27 Oak Forest Baptist Church, Jackson



Clinician  
**DUANE PLASH**  
Minister of Music  
Cottage Hills Baptist Church, Mobile

Sponsored by the Church Music Department  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

1. This festival is designed for children/youth or mixed choirs of children and youth. The music selected for this festival will be beginning, easy, and medium difficulty. It will be limited to two to three octave handbells and/or chimes.
2. To register, complete the registration form and return with appropriate fees to the Church Music Department by Friday, March 19. The fee is \$15 per choir.
3. Set-up and registration is from 9 - 9:30 a.m. The festival will conclude by 2:30 p.m. Mass ringing begins at 9:30 a.m. Lunch is on your own; fast foods and restaurants are near.
4. There is no adjudication, but choirs that would like the experience of ringing for others will be allowed two-and-one-half minutes to ring a selection of their choice. This selection should not be one of the mass ringing numbers. Each of these choirs will ring from its mass ringing position.
5. Choirs should be familiar with the required selections but do not need to be performance ready. Two octave choirs are encouraged to participate in as many of the required selections as possible. Some selections require additional bells but should not keep you from participating.

The 1999 festivals will use a format which, we pray, will give more choirs the opportunity to participate in the festivals. Group I selections are for beginning and inexperienced choirs and are of an easy to easy-medium difficulty. Group II selections are for the experienced and advanced choirs and are of an easy-medium to medium difficult level. The combination selections are of a medium level of difficulty.

The director will choose the group in which their choir will participate and purchase music from Group I or II accordingly. All choirs will purchase the combination numbers.

## 1999 YOUNG RINGERS STATE HANDBELL/CHIME FESTIVAL REGISTRATION FORM

OAK FOREST BAPTIST CHURCH, JACKSON, MARCH 27

CHURCH \_\_\_\_\_ ASSOC. \_\_\_\_\_  
CHURCH ADD. \_\_\_\_\_ street \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_  
MINISTER OF MUSIC \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
CHOIR NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
Director \_\_\_\_\_ Number in Group \_\_\_\_\_  
Group I \_\_\_\_\_ Group II \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of tables you are bringing: \_\_\_\_\_ Total feet in length: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of octaves: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ringing for the Parade of Choirs: ☐ no ☐ yes (2 1/2-minute maximum)  
Selection: \_\_\_\_\_  
Composer: \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes: \_\_\_\_\_

This form and fees should reach the Church Music Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 no later than March 19, 1999. The fee is non-refundable. Please make checks payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.  
If you have more than one choir participating in the festival, make copies of this form and send one form per choir.

☐ Registration fee of \$15 is enclosed. (Lunch is on your own.)

For more information call 1-800-748-1651 or in Jackson 968-3800

6. The selections may be ordered from the Baptist Book Store in Jackson or your supplier. They are listed below.

### Group I

"Bound For Glory" arr. Waldrop Alfred #17551 2-3 octave  
"O Worship the King" arr. Page Alfred #17555 2-3 octave

### Group II

"Rondo" Tucker Concordia Pub. 2-3 octave  
#97-6706  
"Songs of the Angels" arr. Page Choristers Guild 2-3 octave  
#CGB176

### Combined

"Jacob's Ladder" arr. McChesney Alfred #17534 2-3 octave  
"Ring Around A Rainbow" Kinyon Alfred #17549 2-3 octave

# TELL MISSISSIPPI'S CHILDREN



## THEY ARE PRECIOUS IN JESUS' SIGHT

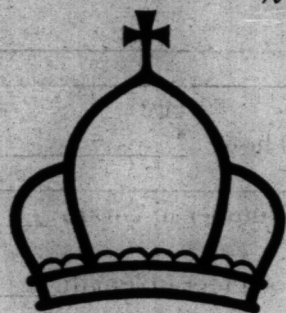
The preschool/children's team will provide resources, events, and training to help Tell Mississippi Children They Are Precious in Jesus' Sight.

1. Resources will be available for associations to conduct a 1999 Associational TeamKid Rally.
2. Resources will be mailed to each church in the February Light Packet to help churches conduct a 1999 Children's Day.
3. Older Children's Retreat information will be mailed in the December Light Packet. Older Children's Retreat, July 22-24, 1999, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian, Miss. Registration opens March 1.
4. Preschool/Children's Ministers Retreat is scheduled for April 29-30, 1999, Patterson Lodge, Camp Garaywa, Clinton.



## FAMILY CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

*A guide for family devotions*



### Kingship

Third Sunday Before Christmas - December 6

**Wreath.** If using a wreath, light the purple candle that you lit last week, and also a second purple one. Have a family member read Isaiah 9:6-7.

**Read.** Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Lord inspired Isaiah to write about this special Child and His kingdom.

We look to our own government for many things. We expect it to protect us from enemies without and from problems within. But we know that this earthly government, like all others, will pass away. God has placed the government of the entire world upon the shoulders of Jesus. He is the great King of Kings, and His government will not pass away.

**Make.** If you have small children, help them to make a crown of construction paper with markers, or crayons. (Purchased "jewels" are always a big hit, too!) Place the crown on your Christmas tree to help you remember that Jesus is the true King of Kings.

**Lead.** If you have older children, lead in a discussion of our own personal responsibility in being a citizen of God's Kingdom. How can we honor God in the world in which we daily find ourselves? We are citizens of two kingdoms, an earthly and a heavenly; and sometimes it is hard to do both well.

**Read.** Have another family member read Matthew 2:6:  
As a family, see how many more Scripture passages you can find that proclaim Christ as King.

During the week, consciously think of yourself as a citizen of an eternal Kingdom. Be sensitive to ways that you can serve your King.

**Sing** a Christmas hymn, perhaps "Joy to the World!" Let everyone pick a hymn.

**Pray.** thanking God for the enormous privilege of serving Him as

The Christmas season is an important time in the life of the Church and the individual Christian. The Family Celebration of Christmas plan has been developed in an effort to assist families and churches in focusing on the true meaning of Christmas. We hope these will enrich your family as you seek to keep Christ at the center of the Christmas celebration.

Camera-ready copies of each week's devotional are available from the Department of Student Work at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530 or call 800/748-1651 or in Jackson 968-3800.

## THE SUIT PROJECT

### What is it?

For over 34 years Baptists in Mississippi have enjoyed sending new suits to the pastors in new work areas. This is our way of letting the pastors in these areas of Southern Baptist life know that we care about and support them in their work.

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**Mississippi Baptist Convention Board  
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Brotherhood Department  
P.O. Box 530  
Jackson, MS  
39205-0530**

Designate on your check:  
Suit Project

Sponsored by  
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"Merry Christmas"  
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Wyoming,  
Montana & Iowa  
Conventions

Cost:  
\$130 per suit

## GA/Acteens Campus Day - Blue Mountain College

**December 5th**

Cost \$7.50 per person (includes basketball game, meal, program & limited insurance)

- **Missionaries**
- **Basketball**
- **Testimonies**
- **Cheerleaders**
- **Music**

### Registration Form for GA/Acteens Campus Day Blue Mountain College, December 5th

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Ph. Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_ Association \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$7.50 x # (of persons) \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (total)

Make checks payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Send to: WMU, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

For more details call the WMU office at 1-800-748-1651



# Pray this day for...

November 27-December 10, 1998

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

## The Praying Family

Prayer within a marriage and family is a foundation builder. Psalm 127:1 reminds us that "unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain." What better way to allow the Lord to build our house and stand guard over it than through prayer?

When our children see us praying about everything related to our family it speaks volumes. When they realize how much we depend upon and trust our heavenly Father for all the "details" of life, they will begin to do the same.

Excerpts from "The Praying Family" by Jonathan Graf, Editor of PRAY Magazine

For the Week of Prayer for International Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (WMU Emphasis)

29

For Foreign Missions Day in the Sunday School (Sunday School Emphasis)

6

Fermin Flores is a teacher-missionary in San Antonio, TX. Pray for growth and strengthening of Seacroft Baptist Church where he serves as interim pastor. Pray about his responsibilities at Hispanic Baptist Seminary in San Antonio. He recently began his 28th year of teaching.

Peter Kendrick of Southfield, MI, is a Cooperative Missions Ministries team leader. Pray for leaders to start 100 works in Michigan before the year 2000. Hope Baptist Center in inner-city Detroit, the seminary extension training site, the chaplaincy ministry to the auto industry, and the ministry to large numbers of college students in the state.

Missionary Paul Siebenmann, in the Dominican Republic, serves as the student team leader on the Santo Domingo Team. Pray that he will effectively train student leaders at the seminary and that they, in turn, will be enthusiastic about wanting to reach the capital city with the gospel message.

For the Executive Committee meeting, Baptist Building, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Meeting, Baptist Building.

8

Baptist representative Mel Skinner has learned that Campus Crusade for Christ will be broadcasting the "Jesus" film via nation-wide television in Russia on January 7 (the Russian Orthodox Christmas) and Easter of 1999. He asks us to pray for them as they mobilize the Russian Baptist churches for this follow up.

The husband of a Sundanese woman of West Java, Indonesia, working for a Christian family, recently died. Because of the economic crisis, her sons were laid off from their jobs. Now she is the sole provider for herself, her four sons, two daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren. Pray that she will come to the Lord and find rest for her soul.

When Hurricane Georges swept through the Dominican Republic in late Sept., the IMB was able to evaluate damage and begin disaster relief immediately. Give for those who have contributed through the Disaster Relief Fund and for local Dominican and Chinese-language churches that are helping with the packing and distribution of food.

An audio format of the "Jesus" film has been prepared in the Taiwanese language. Pray that missionaries serving in Taipei, Taiwan, will be able to distribute 50,000 copies of these tapes during the Christmas season.

10

During the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons, there will be many opportunities to share Christ in China. Christians will be asked to give lectures about the holidays and to host parties. Pray that the one to whom we give thanks and the true gift of Christmas will be portrayed at each lecture and party.

About half of the churches in Western Visayas, Philippines, are without pastors. In recent weeks, a few Baptist young people have indicated that they feel called to mission work. Pray that the association in this area will provide avenues for these young people to serve, and pray that many will be called to pastor churches.

Missionary Gary Stone in Guatemala, who ministers in the Western Highlands among the Mam people requests that we pray for the village of Nuevo-PorVenir where they began establishing a new work Nov. 10-15. Pray that many will hear and be saved.

28

Praise the Lord that revival is transforming the religious landscape in Latin America. In Peru, a Protestant church is planted every eight hours. In Rio de Janeiro, one new congregation is born every day. Brazil's largest denomination, the Assemblies of God, has grown tenfold since 1980, to 15 million members and 90,000 local congregations.

JANUARY

4-78 MR. JOSHUA METTS  
Oklahoma Baptist University, Box 61174  
500 W. University, Shawnee, OK 74801-2590  
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SERVE IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

5-93 MISS MELEAH PEACOCK  
6 Glenhill Crescent, Cochrane, Alberta  
TUL 0W3 CANADA  
Parents: Kevin & Brenda, Theological Education

8-84 MISS EMILY SMITH  
Casilla 223, 8300 Neugen, ARGENTINA  
Parents: Steve & Vidonia Smith, General Evangelism

13-82 MR. SCOTT COREY  
7336 Anela Place, Diamondhead, MS 39520  
Parents: Charles & Patricia, Field Personnel Assistance

15-83 MISS CHESED A. DENT  
105 Billy Byrd, Clinton, MS 39056  
Parents: Donald & Anne, Associate to the Area  
SERVE IN SINGAPORE

19-80 MISS E. AMY PARKER  
P.O. Box 943, Brandon, MS 39042  
Parents: Jeffrey & Shiela, General Evangelism  
SERVE IN UNITED KINGDOM

22-86 MR. BENJAMIN J. BAILEY  
Box GUA 746, 8424 NW 56th St., Miami, FL 33166  
Parents: Alvin & Elizabeth, Music Promotion  
SERVE IN GUATEMALA

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HOUSE TOPS

THE BIBLE RECORD

NOVEMBER 1998



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



**Acteens at West Heights Church, Pontotoc**, recently observed World Hunger month with a Food Hunt. "With the help of the youth department, over 400 packaged food items were collected and donated to the local food pantry," said Little Long, Acteen director.

**Sheila Golden**, GA director of First Church, Batesville, dressed as a hungry bag lady to promote World Hunger Day. She wore a sign that said "feed me, I am hungry" and pushed a grocery cart with a map, flags, and world hunger signs. Golden pushed the cart down the isle as the congregation sang a mission song and the children brought their rice bowls filled with money to put in the shopping cart.



**Golden**

**Brookhaven**, recently held a recognition for its GAS. The theme was "Celebrate!" GAS recognized were Sydney Haley, Mollie Ritchie, Ashley Coker, Emily Wells, Jessi Claire Spencer, Casey Leonard, Emily Walker, Ashli White, Olivia Kirk, Candi White, Betsy Haley, Carly Waldrop, Kori Thompson, Jessalyn Walker, Grace Mulligan, Anna Bishop, and Molly Etheridge. Ken Kirk is pastor.

**Acteens of Rocky Creek**

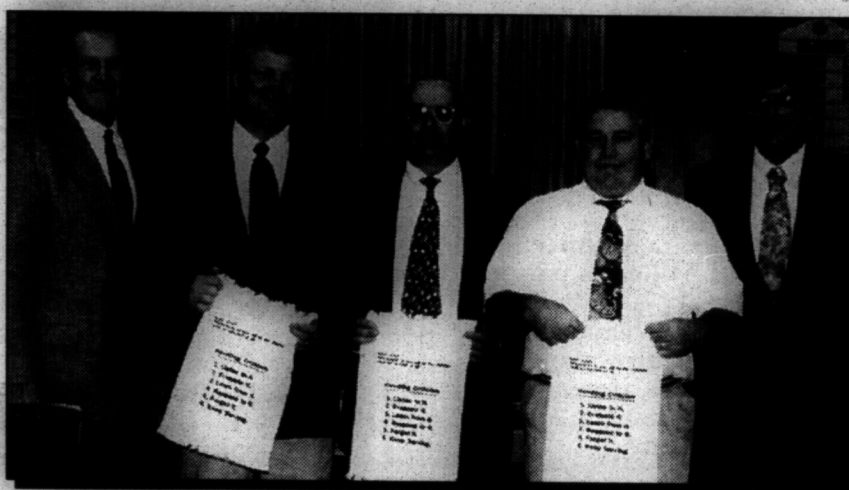
First Church, Newton, are listed in the top 10% of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. The ranking is based on subscriptions to Accent magazine thereby indicating girls involved in the program. Jerry Mixon is pastor of Rocky Creek Church and Frank Harmon is pastor of First Church, Newton.

**Calvary Church, Jackson**, will host a Community Thanksgiving Service on Nov. 22 at 4 p.m. The traditional offering of canned foods and dry staple items and a monetary offering will be received to benefit Crestwood Baptist Center and Stewpot Ministries. For more information, call the church office at (601) 354-1300.

**Houston Road Church, Laurel**, has just completed



**Lebanon Associational Acteens** made quilts to be donated to the homeless.



**Paris Church, Lafayette/Marshall Association**, recently held deacon ordination services for Mickey Babb, Joe McBride, and David Yarbrough, each holding a towel as a symbol of their servant ministry. Pictured (from left) are Don Stanfill, director of missions; Babb; McBride; Yarbrough; and Larry Wicker, pastor.

another presentation of the evangelistic drama, Judgment House, which is offered as an alternative to Halloween. "Thank you to the many church-

es who came and supported this great outreach ministry. We witnessed 235 professions of faith and 81 rededications," said Richard Clark, pastor.



**Macedonia Church, Petal**, recently honored Acteens for completing steps for Queen Regent. Pictured are Amanda Meadows and Holly McGregor.



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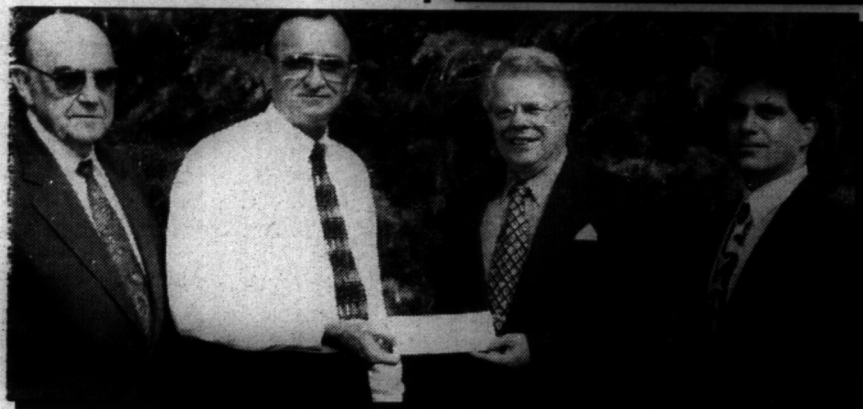
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## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



**Gerald King**, pastor of Arlington Church, Beaumont, and a junior religion major at William Carey College (WCC) from Petal, was presented a scholarship by the Board of Ministerial Education, a division of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Pictured (from left) are William Clawson, professor emeritus at WCC; King; Hardy Denham, director of church relations at WCC; and Daniel Caldwell, vice-president of church relations.

Mississippi College will host concert pianist Markus Schirmer of Vienna, Austria, on Nov. 19 at 7:30 p.m. in Swor Auditorium. Schirmer's philo-

sophy is that during a performance what matters most is expression, vitality and heart, regardless of what type of music he is playing. He has performed with some of the world's leading orchestras. Miroslav Loncar, a native of Croatia, will accompany Schirmer on the guitar. He has been featured in Profiles in Music on Public Radio in Mississippi. For ticket information, call Debbie Pierce at (601) 925-3323 or 924-6096.

**Mississippi College Opera Theater** under the direction of Dana Rice, will present a program of opera scenes in Aven-

Hall auditorium on Nov. 20 and Nov. 21 at 7:30 p.m. The fee for admission is \$2. For ticket information, call (601) 925-3440.

**William Carey Holiday Baseball Camp** will be held Dec. 29-31 on the Carey Campus in Hattiesburg from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. The camp will feature John Stephenson, former Carey coach and currently a coach with the New York Mets. The camp is for ages 7-17 and features individualized instruction and tips. Cost of the session is \$90 which includes a noon meal and camp T-shirt. Applications may be obtained by calling (601) 582-6110 or 582-6192.

**The Mortar Board Cap & Gown** chapter at Mississippi College has been selected to receive the 1997-98 Pi Sigma Alpha Award for conducting the Faculty Appreciation Dinner. This honor is given when the organization has exemplified the ideals of

Mortar Board: scholarship, leadership, and service. Mortar Board, Inc. is the national college senior honor society.

Six representatives from William Carey College (WCC) participated in the Mississippi Association of Colleges' (MAC) 65th annual Junior/Senior Conference held recently at East Central Community College. Larry Kennedy, president, gave the invocation at the Monday night conference banquet. Others on program included Cloyd Ezell, William Rivero, Read Diket, Van Oliphant, and B. J. Martin.

**Cloyd Ezell**, vice president of academic affairs at William Carey College, has announced the appointment of Ray Strebeck, former Gulfport superintendent of schools and former conservator of the State Board of Education, as interim director of education for Carey on the Coast effective Oct. 15.

### STAFF CHANGES

**Good Hope Church, Lena**, has called **Wayne McGee** as pastor effective Nov. 1. A native of Scott County, McGee received his education at Mississippi College. His previous place of service was New Home Church, Scott Association, for 22 years.

**Bethel Church, Monticello**, has called **Bill Miller** as pastor effective Nov. 1. A native of Kansas City, Mo., Miller received his education at Cumberland in New Orleans. He previously served at Montgomery Church in Lincoln Association.

**J. Thomas Littlejohn** has been called as pastor of Pinola Church, Pinola. He previously served as pastor of Smyrna Church, Copiah County. Littlejohn is a graduate of Mississippi College and Southwestern Seminary.

**Patricia Fletcher** has resigned as Preschool/Children's minister at First Church, Columbus, effective Nov. 9. She will fill this position at South Point Church, Belmont, N. C.

### Revivals

**Big Springs (Lincoln)**: Nov. 29-Dec. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Phil Hemby, speaker; Jason Richardson, pastor.

### HOMEcomings

**Line Creek, Morton**: Nov. 22; services, 11 a.m.; lunch in fellowship hall, and 1 p.m. cemetery meeting; Jerry Holmes, East Morton Church, message; Tim Johnson, music; Robert Miles, pastor.

**Eastabuchie, Eastabuchie**: Nov. 22; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch in

fellowship hall; Arlie Spalding, pastor; Donald Burch, minister of music.

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**DIRECTOR OF WEEKDAY CHILD CARE/EDUCATION PROGRAM**: First Baptist Church, Madison. Applicants must meet Mississippi state licensure requirements. For additional information, contact Glenn Holder, Church Business Administrator, PO Box 400, Madison, MS 39130-0400.

**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC/EDUCATION**: First Baptist Church, Carthage. Send resumes to Mr. Louis Smith, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

**FULL-TIME PASTOR**: Shady Grove Baptist Church is seeking God's direction for a full-time pastor. Send resumes to 3166 Deer Creek

Rd., Batesville, MS 38606.

**FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND YOUTH**: First Baptist Church, Terry, MS. Send resume to the Personnel Committee, FBC, PO Box 159, Terry, MS 39170.

**BIVOCATIONAL PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN DIRECTOR**: Send resume to First Baptist Church, PO Box 110, Morton, MS 39117.

**MUSIC DIRECTOR**: Beulah Baptist Church, Decatur. Applicants submit resumes to 12954 Hickory Little Rock Rd., Decatur, MS 39327, Attn: Music Director Search Committee. For additional information, call (601) 635-2515.

B E E S O N D I V I N I T Y S C H O O L

## Being spiritually formed for a Perilous Ministry

SOME TIME AGO, I heard about an ordination service where the two preachers presented contrasting views of the ministry. The first preacher was jovial, *bon vivant*, and he encouraged the young minister to lay aside all fears and plunge forward into his new career with gusto. He contended: "Ministry is a skill to be learned, a technique to be mastered." The other preacher was an older pastor, and he shocked the congregation by what he said. To the young ordinand, he shared one single verse from the Bible: "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!"



Timothy George

The old pastor was right. The ministry is a perilous business. "Nothing is so deadening to the divine," George MacDonald wrote, "as an habitual dealing with the outsides of holy things." Because ministers of the Gospel regularly traffic in matters of eternal moment—birth and death, baptism and marriage, Word and sacrament—it is easy to cultivate a "professional" persona without being grasped by the awesome realities we are called to mediate.

Martin Luther set forth a three-fold pattern of spiritual formation that applies to all Christians. *Oratio* (prayer). *Meditatio* (meditation). *Tentatio* (trial).

**ORATIO**. Faithful, persistent prayer is the basis of all theological work and the heartbeat of every vital ministry. The pastor's study should have at least two open windows: One facing out toward the

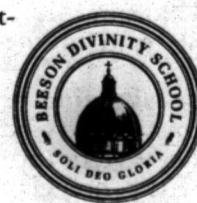
world, the world of suffering and sin for which Christ died; the other a skylight open toward heaven, toward the One in whose Name we serve.

**MEDITATIO**. As ministers of the divine Word, we are called to a life of meditation. This means that the Holy Scriptures must become more than a sourcebook of sermons or a collection of ancient documents to be studied historically and critically. We meditate on the Bible in the company of the people of God through the ages, gleaning wisdom from all the saints.

**TENTATIO**. Luther did not learn this third mark all at once, he says, but followed where trials and temptations led. Sometimes we struggle for our footing in the awful swellings of the Jordan, but we do so in the confidence that through such testing we are being called to know how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting is God's Word, wisdom above all wisdom.

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## LIFE AND WORK

### Resolving internal problems

Nehemiah 5:1-13

By Michael Johnson

Last week we examined how Nehemiah handled opposition that came from outside forces. This week we will explore Nehemiah's strategy when dealing with conflict amongst his own people. In many ways this is an even greater problem, for a group cannot stand united against an external threat where there is dissension from within the ranks. In the text for our study this week, Nehemiah follows four principles that can be used by those who find themselves in similar situations.

**Recognize valid complaints (5:1-5).** The work on the wall was progressing. There were, however, some significant problems that the poorer workers encountered. These includ-

ed: (1) Because of their work on the wall, the poor had been unable to raise food to feed their large families; (2) Many had been forced to borrow money in order to buy food, and others were required to mortgage their property; (3) There was a need to pay taxes, but again there was no money; and (4) Because of the financial difficulties some families were forced to sell their children into slave labor.

To add insult to injury, these poor Jews were experiencing these hardships at the hands of wealthier Jews — their own countrymen! The implication from Nehemiah 3:5 is that the wealthier families had refused to work on the wall even

though they would certainly benefit from its completion. Yet, those who were doing the work on the wall were not only physically spent, but their economic situation was desperate. Certainly, these were valid concerns.

**Confront wrongdoers (5:6-9).** Nehemiah was very angry, but he did not act out of that anger. Wisely, he first carefully thought through his response which no doubt included meditation and reflection. Wouldn't we have better relationships with others if we could exercise the same restraint?

First, Nehemiah goes privately to those responsible for the injustice. There are always two sides to every story, but Nehemiah wanted to make his position clear; he would not support the nobles' action. A public meeting was then held where the accused faced the accusers but the accused 'had nothing to say' (5:8). Taking their silence as

admission of their guilt, Nehemiah warned them that their actions had made God's people vulnerable to the reproaches of their enemies.

**Urge fairness (5:10-11).** Nehemiah had also loaned money to the poor, but he and his associates had not charged interest as the other nobles had apparently done. Making loans without interest was seen as an act of kindness toward the poor. While there is some debate to the extent of exploitation that the poor may have experienced at the hands of the rich it was obviously a violation of the command to treat the poor with justice and kindness.

**Right the wrongs (5:12-13).** The wrongdoers publically promised to make right their wrongs and they did. When the exploiters swore to do what was right, the people praised God. The 'Amen' (5:13) of the people implies that they considered the internal problem resolved. The fact that the wall and gates were rebuilt in only

52 days (6:15) can be seen as evidence of the resolution of those grievances.

The biggest criticism the unchurched of today have against the church is that they are seen as hypocrites — those who claim to be followers of Christ but act more like siblings of Satan. The church today needs leaders like Nehemiah who will be forthright in dealing with offending brethren not only in private but in public. The church needs spokesmen for the poor and disadvantaged who will take a stand against the rich and powerful, regardless of the cost. The church needs leaders who will appeal to the better natures of those who have transgressed and hold them accountable for future actions. For only when the church truly becomes the church in word and deed will the world take notice and then be transformed.

Johnson is a professor in the Christian Studies and Philosophy Department at Mississippi College.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Guidelines for worship

Exodus 25:1-2, 8-9, 20-22; 29:41-46

By Walter M. Blackman

Many great buildings have been built by man. Some buildings, like the Taj Mahal and the Great Pyramids, are examples of man's marvelous ability to build. However, God instructed the Israelites to build a tabernacle that was perfect in every detail. Every part of it had a prophetic or symbolic significance in God's plan of redemption. The Lord gave Moses specific instructions on building the tabernacle and how his people should worship him.

**Contributing willingly**

(25:1-2). The Lord told Moses to take up a love offering for the tabernacle. All the materials were to be given as an act of joyous worship. The gifts from God's people were to come from the heart — the very seat of one's will and emotion. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians to "give what he has decided in his heart to give" and further stated, "for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). The Lord did not create us as spiritual robots, but as a people called to choose freely God's gracious invitation to

participate with him in his plan of world redemption. When God's people begin to argue over whether tithing is still required, whether one should tithe on the gross or net, or whether the tithe should go here or there, they miss out on the blessing of worshipping through

giving freely and cheerfully.

**Communing with God (25:8-9, 20-22).** The Lord told Moses to have the people make a sanctuary for him. The word sanctuary literally means "holy place." The sanctuary was also called the tabernacle, a place for God to settle down in and abide with his people. Another term used was "the tent" (Ex. 26:36), also known as the "tent of meeting" and the "tent of testimony"

(Num. 17:7). All the terms described the place of worship where God would meet with his people. Ultimately, God "tabernacled" with his people through Jesus and gave us complete access to him through his blood. Inside the tabernacle, God's people were to place an ark, a small box made of acacia wood and covered with gold. On top of the ark was the mercy seat which covered the ark and provided a covering for the people's sin. The ark, containing the tablets of the Law, the rod of Aaron, and a pot of manna, symbolized the very presence of God. The cherubim were to be placed over the mercy seat to guard the holiness of God's presence, just as they do in Heaven (Ezek. 10).

Our worship of the Lord ought to convey a sense of reverence and speak to the holiness

of God. Our worship should also reflect thankfulness for the access we have into the presence of the Lord through Jesus.

**Sacrificing daily (29:41-46).** No approach was to be made to the Lord without a sacrifice. The sacrifices were to be regular and continue throughout future generations. Our worship no longer requires the daily sacrifices of animals, but rests on the "once for all" sacrifice of Jesus (Heb. 10:10). However, we are to regularly present ourselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). Furthermore, we are to involve ourselves in a continual corporate worship experience which will bring encouragement to each other as we await the return of Christ (Heb. 10:24-25).

Blackman is pastor of First Church, Marion.

## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### A time of hope

Ezekiel 37:1-11, 25, 26-27

By Greg Bowers

We're about to enter into what should be the most joyous season of the year. Most of us will eat, sing, eat, shop, eat, decorate, eat, travel, eat, celebrate, and eat continuously for the next five weeks! I really hate to share depressing news, but did you know that more people are hospitalized for depression in December than any other month of the year? December is the highest month of the year for arrests, bankruptcies, and teenage runaways. Last Christmas Day, 92 Americans took their own lives. It may be hard for us to understand, but there is a lot of despair out there. There are likely some in your own Sunday School class who are hopeless, helpless, and

friendless. This week we are reminded that no situation is hopeless for those who have a personal relationship with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Nothing is beyond his ability to renew, restore, and revive.

**Hopeless situation (vv. 1-3).** Ezekiel ministered to God's people while they were captives in Babylon. Their homeland had been sacked. They were a great distance from family and friends. They thought that God had turned his back on them. In the midst of all of that despair, God dramatically demonstrated his ability to turn despair into victory for his people. God showed Ezekiel a huge valley filled with dry, brittle, parched, bleached bones. God asked

Ezekiel a remarkable question, "can these bones live?" i.e. "Is there potential for life in these lifeless frames?" Ezekiel knew that humanly speaking, it was impossible, so his answer was somewhat guarded. Only a sovereign God could accomplish such a feat.

**Amazing transformation (vv. 4-10).** God told Ezekiel to speak to the bones. All of us have addressed dead audiences, but never like this! Ezekiel complied with God's instructions. He told the bones that a time was coming when God would restore them to life. Upon the completion of his message to the bones, there was a noise and a shaking and, suddenly, the bones began to come together. At first, they came together to form skeletons. The skeletons were then covered with muscles and flesh, and finally a layer of skin covered the entire surface. Ezekiel found himself standing before a huge army of statues. They had eyes,

hair, skin, etc., but the source of life is not organs, tissues, and systems. Life is given and ultimately taken by God and he breathed into them, causing the statues to spring to life. The word "breath" is also translated "spirit." God has placed his spirit within those of us who know him. That spirit is a guide, helper, encourager, and an indicator of God's interest in us. God's spirit can breathe life into dead churches, dead dreams, dead relationships, and dead hearts.

**Joyful proclamation (vv. 11, 25-27).** God told Ezekiel that the bones represented his people. Just as the bones sprang to life, God would re-energize his chosen people and fully restore them to their rightful place. As a result, God's people would return to their homeland and would enjoy a new relationship with him. That prophecy was fulfilled a few years later when the Babylonians were defeated by the Persians and God's people were allowed to return home. They did so and

enjoyed a lengthy period of peace and prosperity. I hear people comment that America's spiritual and moral outlook appears to be hopeless. There is ample evidence to draw that conclusion. But, remember that eliminating hopelessness is God's specialty. A hopeless people plus a sovereign God is the perfect recipe for revival!

Always remember these irrefutable facts: 1) God loves you with an indescribable love. 2) God created you for a purpose. 3) God is vitally interested in everything that happens to you, even those events which others might deem trivial. 4) God is with you everywhere you go and in everything that you do. The greatest promise in all of scripture is the promise of God's abiding presence. 5) No matter how devastating your circumstances appear to be, there is hope in a personal relationship with God, made possible through Christ's shed blood.

Bowers is pastor of First Church, Indiana.



## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### A time for renewal

Nehemiah 8:13 - 9:3

By Greg Bowers

While on a trip to London, my wife and I went to see the great Metropolitan Tabernacle — the church where Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached so eloquently for decades. His sermons were biblically-based and powerful in their effect. Even today, they continue to bless and challenge millions of people. Now the church is only a shadow of its former glory.

While walking around the grounds, I encountered a deacon and asked him why the church has declined so steadily over the years. "We started to decline when we got away from the Word of God," was his reply. That statement is true of a church, an individual, and a country. Revival will come in response to our desire for and

obedience to the Word of God. I have yet to find a single instance of God working in any way other than through his Word. Our churches, families, and country need to be renewed. That renewal will come as we desire, declare and demonstrate God's Holy Word.

**Renewed knowledge (v. 3).** The book of Nehemiah opens with the walls around Jerusalem having been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. God's people returned from captivity in Babylon and were horrified to find the walls broken, leaving the city vulnerable to attack. God raised up Nehemiah to lead the people in rebuilding the walls. In spite of danger, derision, and discouragement, Nehemiah persevered and the project was completed.



Bowers

The people again enjoyed safety, international recognition, and national pride, but one thing was missing — a renewed relationship with God.

In chapter 8, the people gathered and Ezra, their spiritual leader, began to read from the law of Moses (portions of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Their interest and enthusiasm were such that they spontaneously stood when he began reading, then prostrated themselves before the Lord and remained so all morning long. Groups of special teachers helped explain the law to the people. They began to weep when they realized their sins. Nehemiah instructed them not to wallow in self-pity, but to go forth from that place with rejoicing. According to verse 13, the leaders of the people returned the second day for more intensive instruction in the law.

**Renewed obedience (vv. 14-18).** The people became convict-

ed over their disobedience to rules and regulations regarding feasts and festivals, particularly the Feast of Booths which had not been celebrated with regularity in over 500 years. The Feast of Booths (sometimes called the Feast of Tabernacles) was celebrated on the 15th day of Tishri (around October 15 on our calendar). It commemorated how their forefathers lived in temporary dwelling places during the 40-year wilderness wanderings and how God providentially protected them and provided for their needs. Upon hearing the Word, the people eagerly gathered the materials and joyfully celebrated God's goodness and provision.

**Renewed commitment (9:1-3).** At the conclusion of the Feast of Booths, the people demonstrated the effect that the Word had had upon them. They separated themselves from the pagan inhabitants of the land and confessed their sins. They spent six hours in Bible study and another six hours in worship and confession.

These verses contain God's recipe for revival. There is separation, confession, immersion, (in God's Word) and adoration. If we are to experience revival, we must separate ourselves from pagan influences which distort and deny God's Word. We must also confess our sins to him. "Confess" is a word which means to "agree with God." We must agree with him about the nature, frequency, and end results of our sins. We must also immerse ourselves in God's Holy Word. In a day when people question, deny, and ridicule the Bible, it becomes increasingly necessary for us to be hearers, readers, and doers of the Word. Finally, adoration must be central to everything we do. We serve a God worth praising and we possess a gospel worth sharing and we have been given an inheritance worth anticipating. I hope that every church and family in our state experiences a "revival through the Bible."

Bowers is pastor of First Church, Indianola.

## LIFE AND WORK

### Celebrating a job well done

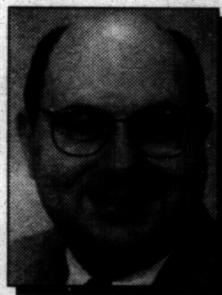
Nehemiah 6:15-16; 12:27-47

By Michael Johnson

Reflect for a moment on the last time you completed a big project. Do you remember how glad you were that the task was finally done? Was there a feeling of relief and joy? Multiply those feelings a hundred times over and we would probably begin to appreciate what Nehemiah felt when his awesome task of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls was finished.

**Complete the work (6:15-16).** Scripture indicates that the work on the gates and wall were completed in 52 days. While some scholars have disputed that such a major task could have been accomplished in so sort of a time, we should

note that the whole written account has reflected a sense of urgency and haste. Even Nehemiah's enemies recognized that this feat could not have been accomplished without the assistance of God. Remember from previous lessons that Nehemiah had experienced serious setbacks as he worked to complete the wall. Yet through it all he persevered. Truly with God all things are possible! Believers today should recognize that when we successfully complete a God-given job this can be a testimony to others of God's work, but we can complete the task only when we are willing to stick



Johnson

with it. What matters is how we finish a task as opposed to how we start.

**Dedicate the job (12:27-30).** We should never take the full credit for work when it is completed. Rarely is anything accomplished without the assistance of others. Many readers of this column have been very gracious in their appreciation for this commentary. You should know that I have not done this alone. There have been great editors at The Baptist Record and I have relied heavily on the scholarship of others in preparing these words. Just as Nehemiah staged a great celebration with songs of thanksgiving to God to dedicate the wall, I give God the glory if anyone has found these lesson commentaries helpful.

**Celebrate with joy (12:31, 38a, 40-41a, 43).** It must have been quite a scene to behold when the Jews joined together to

celebrate the completion of the wall. In just a few days people all over this country will gather around tables laden with food in celebration of Thanksgiving. While this is an important time to remember and give thanks, let us also remember that as believers our lives should be a daily expression of offering thanks to God. Perhaps those teaching this lesson could brainstorm with class members on practical ways a daily life of Christian joy and thanksgiving can be appropriately lived. Experience teaches us that these times of celebration can fortify us when we are forced to deal with some of life's more unpleasant encounters. Remember that Jesus himself faced Gethsemane only after celebrating Passover.

**Continue the momentum (12:44-47).** Just because one task ends does not mean that there isn't more that needs to be done. Out of the celebration activities grew other opportu-

nities for the people to honor God by caring for the needs of others. We are never to rest on our laurels. If we have been proven to be faithful in the small things, then we have been promised to be given stewardship over even more!

You are encouraged to pause and take notice of the victories that have occurred in your personal life, the life of your family, and the life of your church. Express appreciation to those who have been instrumental in helping you get where you are today. Rejoice. Affirm one another. Grow in faithfulness. Then turn and apply the same enthusiasm and dedication at the next task so that one day we might join with Paul in stating "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

Johnson is a professor in the Christian Studies and Philosophy Department at Mississippi College, Clinton.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Foundations for a new beginning

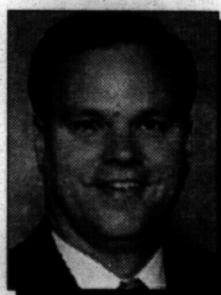
Exodus 32:1-4, 30-34; 34:6-7

By Walter M. Blackman

We celebrate New Year's Day so enthusiastically because we love and desire new beginnings. A student who makes a bad grade in one semester can earn a better grade the next semester. A team that has a bad season can come back and win a championship.

God's people also need new beginnings. We have a new church year for measuring the results of our work and revivals to bring people back to a close relationship with the Lord. We all need new beginnings.

**Breaking fellowship (32:1-4).** God's people no sooner accepted the terms of their covenant with the Lord than they broke it. Moses lingered on the mountain for forty days, receiving the law of God. The people grew impatient and demanded Aaron to fashion a golden calf to worship. Many people would rather worship a god of their own imagination than the one true God of revelation because they do not want to patiently trust in him. A lack of concern for God's leaders and lack of trust in the Lord will result in sinful actions. Aaron's compli-



Blackman

ance with the people's request demonstrates how quickly spiritual leaders can be led astray by following the desires of people rather than the commands of God. Fellowship with the Lord can be broken by impatiently turning to outside sources of security, provision, and gratification. The temptation to give our devotion to visible substitutes or "gods" warns us of putting too much emphasis on the visible evidences of God's presence rather than taking God at his word.

**Seeking forgiveness (32:30-34).** The consequences of the people's sin led to the death of about three thousand Israelites. Moses sought to make atonement for the people's sin and went to the Lord seeking forgiveness. Moses asked to be destroyed with the people if God would not forgive.

Moses' example should challenge us to pray earnestly for those out of fellowship with God.

God's answer made it clear that each person who sinned faced his/her own judgment, not those who were faithful. God brought a plague upon his people for their sin. Only when each individual seeks forgiveness for their own specific sins can the judgment of God be avoided. When God's people depart from him, they must either return or face his discipline. Peter described the coming judgment of God, but also added "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

**Restoring fellowship (34:6-7).** The Lord punished and forgave his people, then offered them a new beginning. The tablets of stone Moses destroyed in anger at the people's sin were replaced by new ones. The Lord

revealed to Moses his gracious nature by passing in front of him proclaiming himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love and faithfulness. The Lord also declared his desire to share his love with thousands and his willingness to forgive their wickedness, rebellion, and sin.

Those who do not repent and receive God's forgiveness place themselves and their families under judgment. Notice God's punishment extends up to four generations, but his love extends to thousands. Sin often produces consequences in our lives and the lives of our children, even when God has forgiven us. However, every generation is able to renounce the evil of their parents and begin anew with the Lord. God wants his people to experience a new beginning with him.

Blackman is pastor of First Church, Marion.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director

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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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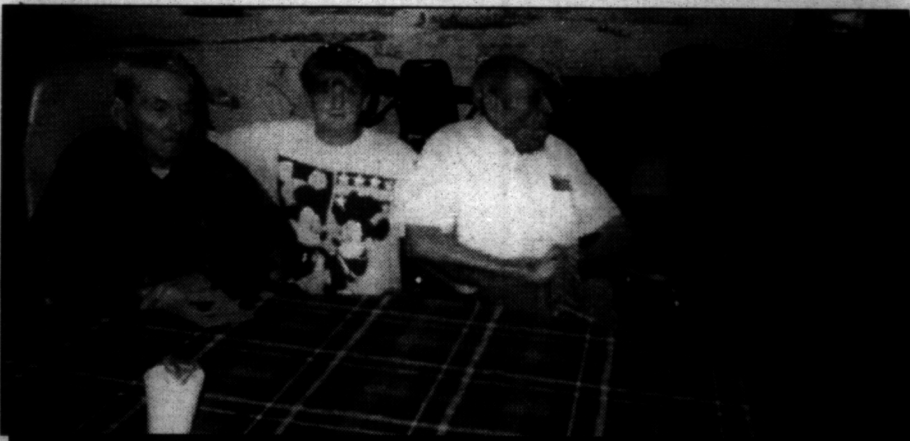
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Brittany and Ruby enjoy their volunteer work at a Jackson nursing home. The girls along with other members of The Baptist Children's Village community service club recently shared their handmade gifts with the residents.



Happy Thanksgiving  
from Mississippi's  
largest family!



The residents and staff of the India Nunnery campus recently held an appreciation party for Jon West, chaplain; Bill Maner, recreation director; and J. D. Hewitt, recreation assistant. The three were recognized for a job well done.







#### YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.  
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.  
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.  
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.  
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

### Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
copyright 1998

VNBG YGCQU DLZE YG,  
Z SZW, NQQZCWPE OZ  
OVU AZBPESTPEWEGKK:  
NQQZCWPE DEOZ OVG  
YDAOPDWG ZX OVU  
OGEWGC YGCQPGK  
MAZO ZDO YU  
OCNEKSCGKKPZEK.  
LKNAYK XPXOU-ZEG: ZEG

Clue: Y = M

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Eight One.

# Internet offers witnessing opportunities

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — The statistics alone are enough to choke almost any computer's hard drive.

Currently, about 100 million people worldwide "surf the net." As more and more people are going global via the Internet, this once-vast universe is becoming smaller and smaller. While it took radio 30 years to reach 50 million people and television 13 years, the Internet did it in just four years.

At the dawn of a new millennium, this communication medium has given new meaning to the phrase "reach out and touch someone." So what implications does this rapidly flourishing technology have on the fulfillment of the Great Commission, the biblical mandate to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

"It's an excellent method," says Abraham, a master of theology student at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. Abraham, a former Muslim from Egypt, has led about 20 people to salvation in Christ over the Internet during the past two years. He bought a computer with money saved from preaching at churches. "Ever since, the Lord has been glorified in it and we want it

to be the Lord's computer," he says.

Abraham's evangelistic efforts have not always been warmly received. He had to forfeit one of his Internet accounts when Muslims complained that he was proselytizing on-line. He has also received several death threats by extremist Muslim groups.

Alvin Reid, associate professor of evangelism at Southeastern, employs a different strategy for evangelizing via the World Wide Web. He strikes up conversations with complete strangers conversing in "chat rooms" created for people with common interests such as careers and family.

The Internet, Reid says, promises to play an important role in reaching the world for the cause of Christ in the 21st century. Reid hopes to launch an evangelistic web site from the seminary when its new Center for Great Commission Studies is built.

Still, Reid warns, with the evangelistic opportunities created by the Internet so come the perils. "Anything with the potential for good has the potential for harm, and this is very much a double-edged sword. Many of these people are completely secular and you would never get a

chance to talk to them at their door, you would never get them to church but they will talk to you on-line. The strength is almost the danger because they can be anonymous."

Bill Cooley, a mental health professional at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi, says the anonymity of Internet communication has great potential for misuse because it allows a person to escape from reality.

"Many individuals go on-line and gain a sense of acceptance from people they don't even know," he says. "It's a coming-home feeling that can entice people to the detriment of family, home, career, and health."

Reid warns that those who use the Internet to share the gospel should guard their time closely and have an accountability partner. "It can be so addictive because you can almost have another identity and that's the dangerous thing about it," says Reid, who writes about using the Internet as an evangelistic tool in his new book, "Introduction to Evangelism," published this year by Broadman & Holman, the trade books arm of LifeWay Christian Resources.

## Churches, teens can help with '99 TLW goals

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Recent government surveys have found that sexual activity among teens is declining, and while True Love Waits officials don't presume to take all the credit, they'll take some.

"Although True Love Waits is not the only player in the sexual abstinence movement, it has had a tremendous impact on many young lives," said Jimmy Hester, co-coordinator of True Love Waits for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

True Love Waits, created in April 1993 by LifeWay, has become a worldwide campaign designed to challenge teenagers to make a promise to God to abstain from sex until they enter a biblical marriage relationship. In 1994, more than 211,000 True Love Waits cards covered the National Mall in Washington, and in 1996, more than 350,000 cards were stacked to the roof of the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

In October 1999, TLW officials hope to see a national display of cards on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. "Crossing Bridges with Purity" is the True Love Waits theme for 1999-2000.

True Love Waits goals for 1999 are:

♦ Friday, Feb. 12, community display. During the months of January and February 1999, students will conduct local campaigns challenging their peers to sign commitment cards to remain sexually abstinent until marriage. On Feb. 12, schools, local churches, and

community organizations will come together to make a joint display at a focal place in the community.

♦ Spring and summer 1999, state display. Cards from community displays will be sent to a central point in the state for a statewide display during spring and summer.

♦ Oct. 2, 1999, national display. Cards from each state display will be sent to San Francisco for a national display on Oct. 2, 1999. Plans include carrying the cards from all over America across the Golden Gate Bridge.

♦ December 1999, international display. Cards from all of the state displays in the United States and cards from other countries will be sent to New Zealand to be displayed together near the International Date Line (where the year 2000 will first arrive). The international display will represent students around the world poised to move into a new era of history with a commitment to moral purity.

"I hope Christians around the world will join to praise God for what he is doing in the lives of today's young people, and how they are challenging our society's moral standards, uplifting and modeling godly character," Hester said.

A "True Love Waits Manual 1999-2000: Crossing Bridges with Purity" is available by calling 1-800-458-2772. The 96-page manual includes complete information about creating community and state displays, relating to local media, creating True Love Waits rallies and events, and getting cards to national

and international displays.

For questions regarding True Love Waits, call 1-800-LUV-

WAIT or e-mail truelovewaits@lifeway.com or visit the web site at truelovewaits.com.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson



I got so angry in traffic that I intentionally bumped the car in front of me. The look of terror on the elderly man's face so gripped me that I can't forget it. How do I deal with such anger?

You are probably living an overwhelmed and overburdened life. The "Type A" behavior you're describing is marked by impatience and frustration with people who get in your way. When your goals are blocked, frustration sets in and you find yourself reacting in angry, aggressive ways. You are moving toward destruction. Recognizing your problem is the first step. You must allow yourself to set more reasonable goals and learn how to cope with people who don't see things your way. Be kind to yourself by engaging in outlets such as exercise, hobbies, quiet times, and Bible study. When you feel yourself getting uptight, step back and take a deep breath. Laugh at the humorous things that once infuriated you. Listen to soothing music. Tell funny stories to your friends. If you don't learn to relax, it won't be much longer before you "blow a

fuse," and the results will be tragic. Lighten up!

I overheard my 16-year-old daughter making plans to run away. I've nailed her window shut, but is that all I can do?

Her desire to run away is a statement, and you won't be able to figure that out until you talk with her. When was the last time you took her out and made her feel special? She needs your attention. Give her that attention in a positive way and look for the good in her. Mention the qualities you appreciate and drop her little notes pointing out positive actions she has taken. Such conduct on your part will help her open up and communicate with you. Don't mention that you overheard her plans, because she may conclude that dropping bombshells like that is an effective way to get your attention. Give her your time, and listen attentively. She has questions and needs someone who will listen and try to understand her feelings. You can't "fix" her, but you can be there as a sounding board as she matures into adulthood.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember, in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.